

Our Young People

HOW TO ENJOY OUR RELIGION

Neh. 8: 8-12; I Pet. 4: 3, 12, 13.

Topic for Dec. 18.

There was a time when many thought that joy was a sure sign of depravity and the air of solemnity was the only air conducive to spiritual health. The writer remembers a severe reproof once received from a neighbor for whistling a gospel tune on Sunday. Some have even yet not ceased singing, "This world's a wilderness of woe," but most of us have learned to sing, "There is sunshine in my soul today," and better we have learned to sing, "Scatter smiles and sunshine all along your way, Cheer and bless and brighten every passing day."

Joy is consciousness of harmony. The dead are not conscious and the inactive are dead. True joy is only found in living, active existence in harmony with God's will as expressed in his laws.

Those who mourn so much the "good old times" are usually found feeding on the memory of past good deeds instead of keeping up their activity.

There is danger of Phariseism and formality, in observing worship without work. There is danger of sudden falling, in working without adequate time for devotion, but our greatest danger lies in the tendency to neglect both work and worship in an endeavor to "enjoy religion." Joy is not found by seeking it directly. How we may be happy in living the Christ life is to be studied in this lesson.

- 1 The Christian should be happy, Phil. 3: 1; 4: 4; Deut. 28: 47, 48; Isa. 61: 3; 65: 14; Rom. 14: 7. (Do not give more references than necessary to one person)
- 2 Joy in believing, Rom. 15: 13.
- 3 Joy in the word, John 15: 11; 17: 13.
- 4 Joy in worship, Psalms 27: 6.
- 5 Joy in working, Ps. 126: 5, 6; John 13: 17.
- 6 Joy in divine fellowship, Ps. 16: 11.
- 7 Joy in suffering, I Peter 4: 13, 14.
- 8 Joy in temptations, Jas. 1: 2.
- 9 Joy in infirmities, II Cor. 10: 12.
- 10 Joy in persecutions, Luke 6: 22, 23.
- 11 Joy in helpfulness, II Cor. 1: 24; Prov. 14: 21.
- 12 Joy in trusting people, II Cor. 7: 16.

FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

- 1 What are some things that prevent joy in religion?
- 2 Why should Christians be happier than other people?
- 3 What is the difference between right and wrong pleasure?
- 4 What was the source of Christ's joy?
- 5 Is joy the end to seek in our religion?
- 6 If we do not enjoy our religion what may we conclude?
- 7 If one has lost his joy in religion how may he find it?
- 8 (For everybody to answer.) What can you say from your experience as to the best way to enjoy religion?

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HOW TO ENJOY OUR RELIGION

Z. T. LIVENGOOD

We certainly ought to enjoy our religion. If we fail to do so something is wanting. It may be in the religion, it may be in the person,

God evidently intended his creatures should find comfort and joy in his religion. Nehemiah said unto the people when they were weeping and mourning, "mourn not nor weep"—"neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The joy of the Christian, or the joy of the one who has the true religion, is something vastly different from the joy of the sinner, or the joy

of the man who has a spurious religion. It may be that the Arab enjoys his Mohammedan religion. Yes, I think he does. The ignorant and depraved African may enjoy his religion when he bows before a hideous image of stone or wood or clay. I think even the miser has a certain enjoyment in hoarding and secreting and piling up and bowing before his gold and his silver. But can all these afford such enjoyment as comes from paying reverence to and serving the true and living God? We answer no. The first thing that is essential if we would enjoy our religion aright is *to get the right kind*. There is very much in this. Religion is easily mixed and becomes a mongrel, a half-breed. The religion of Jesus Christ is the true and pure article, therefore accept Jesus. Do his will. Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Then again we ought to have enough of it so that we *can* enjoy it. Some people have the right kind of religion but have so precious little that people with ordinary observation fail to see any of it. It would require a magnifying glass to see what they do have. Do not be afraid to take a good large dose. It will do you good. Our weakness lies largely in the fact that we refuse to take the medicine, God's word. We do like some sick persons: throw the prescribed dose into the spittoon. So we look at the word and conclude that it was for the apostles and early Christians, but not for me and away goes the word, thrown among the rubbish and at last, like the Jews, we have lost the word of our God.

Then again we must do our part if we would enjoy our religion. We must quit weeping and mourning and murmuring and go about our Father's business. We must go to work and labor at our trade—our religion. It will require practice to really enjoy our labors. Some of us work at religion so very rarely that when we do, we go about it awkwardly and disagreeably. Our religion ought to be our business. If we have the right kind of religion and plenty of it, and give it our time and talent and work continuously at it, we will *then* enjoy it.

JUNIOR METHODS TRIED AND PROVEN

ANNA SHORB

The children of today are the society, the church and the nation of tomorrow. Music, oratory, enterprise and political devices, power, social, commercial, educational and religious lie all unfashioned and undirected in the little hearts and brains of the children. How shall all this power be directed? The Junior society is one of the best solutions for this problem. Much work done for children will seem like wasted work, but in every department of God's church there is much apparent waste, however, there is less loss than occasional observers or over-sensitive critics imagine. Better that a few seeds go on rock and wayside, than that no seed at all go into good ground. Let us do well the work we attempt, that it may avoid as far as possible

all mistakes; let it not lack what children most appreciate,—good common sense.

How to secure and keep the attendance. Have the Junior meeting announced every Sunday, and ask the children as you meet them to come, or bright cards may be handed or sent to them with a scripture text on one side and an invitation to the meeting written or printed on the other. Visiting the parents and asking them to send their children is a good way, also impress on the children their responsibility for their companions. It is a good plan to interest the boys first and secure their attendance and help in the meetings. After you have the children there, interest them. Children are apt to want to go back to a place where they have had a good time. Give them food from the Bible, food prepared for them by honest effort and earnest thought. Stories, pictures and sweet songs are all excellent helps. To keep the children interested, keep them busy, give each one something to do. Let them have their own officers and leaders, form numerous committees, a superintendent for each of the committees should be selected from the senior society to accomplish the best results.

A good way to have children be punctual is by a large placard with words "I am early," printed on one side in gold letters, on the other side in black letters, "I am late," placed in front where all can see with the "I am early," side out, until the meeting has been opened, then have one of the Juniors turn the "I am late," side out and place the number present early on the black board, those coming in after the card has been changed are late.

It is well to ask the children to prepare themselves with a scripture text to repeat at each meeting, thus they become familiar with the Bible, also help in the meetings. In every Junior meeting one simple word can be chosen as the key-word of the meeting,—such words as "trust," "courage," "love," etc. The superintendent should select the word the week before and ask each member to bring to the next meeting a verse containing the key-word of that meeting. Many superintendents have tried the plan of asking each one to bring to the next meeting a verse beginning with some certain word,—"let," for instance, "come," "go," "send," and so on, with success.

It is a good plan to have all who have read the Bible every day in the week, or if too young to read have repeated a verse after some older person each day, to report "perfect" at roll-call.

The lessons should be simple and pointed making practical application of the truths, to both the Christian and unconverted. The use of the black-board is of great benefit if only for writing outlines, especially is it useful for missionary meetings, for drawing maps, etc.

Our Junior missionary meetings should be among the most interesting of all the meetings and they may be made so if only a little work is put into them. For example, on the